

This is the opportunity of a generation. It has literally been a generation since we did anything this much for children's health insurance. We mustn't waste it. The balanced budget plan, the tax cut, all these things we have to keep in mind putting our children first. In the days to come, as we try to hammer out the details, a breakthrough for children's health should be at the heart of our objectives.

We also ought to make sure that the tax cut we pass is good for our children. I have proposed a plan that focuses on the needs of families, to help them raise their children and send them to college. It is responsible; it is affordable. We don't want to return to the days when, under the guise of helping people, we gave them endless exploding deficits. Fiscal responsibility helped to produce a strong economy, and fiscal irresponsibility would surely weaken it. We can have the right kind of tax cut plan, but we ought to keep the children in mind there, too.

Finally, let me say that, as I said earlier, one of the things we expect to do that will really help us close the remaining gaps in immunization is to require children in federally subsidized child care centers to be immunized. I'm convinced the next great frontier we have to cross to really, truly enable American families to reconcile the demands that they face in the workplace and the demands they face at home is to make sure we have quality, affordable, available child care for all the American people who need it.

One of the reasons I've supported this children's tax credit and one of the reasons I want it to be given to people of modest means who are working hard out there for salaries of less than \$30,000, is I want to help people pay for the right kind of child care. This is very important.

On October 23d, the First Lady and I will convene the first-ever White House Conference on Child Care, to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the present system in America and to try to find ways to translate that discussion into action to achieve our goal, just as we have achieved this goal today.

Immunization, health care, child care, all these reflect our faith in the potential of every child and honor our obligation to every family. For all the work you have done to help make this remarkable day come to pass, I thank you, your fellow citizens thank you, and I hope someday the American people will truly understand the magnitude of the endeavors that so many of you in this room have undertaken for the next generation of our children.

Thank you all, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Fernando Guerra, director of health, San Antonio Metropolitan Health District; and Betty Bumpers, wife of Senator Dale Bumpers.

Statement Announcing the White House Conference on Child Care

July 23, 1997

Today the First Lady and I are pleased to announce that on October 23, 1997, we will host the White House Conference on Child Care. The conference, which will take place at the White House, will examine the strengths and weaknesses of child care in America and explore how our Nation can better respond to the needs of working families for affordable, high quality child care.

Over the past decade, the number of American families with working parents has expanded dramatically. Making high quality child care more affordable and accessible is critical to the

strength of our families and to healthy child development and learning. It is also good for the economy and central to a productive American work force.

This Nation can and should do better. Each of us—from businesses to religious leaders to policymakers and elected officials—has a responsibility and an important stake in making sure that children of all ages have the best possible care available to them. From infancy through adolescence, in child care settings and after-school programs, children can learn and thrive with the right care, attention, and education.

I hope that this conference will be the beginning of a national dialog about how best to care for all of America's children and will make

a valuable contribution to our effort to improve child care in this country.

Statement on European Union Approval of the Boeing-McDonnell Douglas Merger *July 23, 1997*

I am pleased that Boeing and the EU have resolved their differences and that the EU has agreed in principle to approve Boeing's merger with McDonnell Douglas. The Boeing-McDonnell Douglas merger will promote consolidation and efficiency in the U.S. defense industry and

preserve the jobs of 14,000 workers at Douglas Aircraft Co. Our own independent Federal Trade Commission determined that the merger would not harm competition. We hope that the EU will give the merger final approval expeditiously.

Remarks During a Discussion on Climate Change *July 24, 1997*

The President. Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, first let me thank you for being here—members of the administration and concerned members of the public, the scientists, and other experts that are here.

I would also like to say a special word of thanks to the Vice President. In one of our earliest meetings together—we meet once a week and have lunch—he went over the whole history of greenhouse gas emissions and climatic change. And I became convinced first that he was convinced that something was wrong. [Laughter] Then I became convinced something was wrong. And it's been a great help to me and I believe to the people of the United States to have him in the position that he's in, not only with the convictions that he has but with the knowledge that he has. And I'm very grateful to him for what he has done to help me come to grips with this issue.

To me, we have to see this whole issue of climate change in terms of our deepest obligations to future generations. I have spent most of my time in the last 4½ years trying to prepare the American people for a new century and a new millennium. It is also very important that we protect the Earth for that new millennium, to make sure that people will be able to take advantage of all the things we are trying

to do, the opportunities we are trying to create, the problems we are trying to solve.

It is obvious that we cannot fulfill our responsibilities to future generations unless we deal responsibly with the challenge of climate change. Whenever the security of our country has been threatened, we have led the world to a better resolution. That is what is at stake here. And the scientists have come here to explain why.

As the Vice President said, the overwhelming balance of evidence and scientific opinion is that it is no longer a theory but now a fact that global warming is for real. The world scientists believe that if we don't cut our emissions of greenhouse gases, we will disrupt the global climate. In fact, there is ample evidence that human activities are already disrupting the global climate and that if we stay on our current course, the average global temperatures may rise 2 to 6 degrees Fahrenheit during the next century. To put that in some context, the difference in average temperature between the last ice age, which was 10,000 to 12,000 years ago—10,000 to 12,000 years ago—and today, is about 9 degrees Fahrenheit. So we could have two-thirds of that change in 100 years unless we do something.